

of the most sophisticated users of IT, are 8% of our economy; from 1995 to 1998 they contributed 35% of our economic growth. There are also some indications that IT is now improving productivity among companies that only use IT.

But here is the real point. If we are going to sustain this productivity and economic growth, we have to spread sophisticated uses of information technology like e-commerce beyond the high tech sector and companies like Cisco Systems and into every corner of the economy, including small businesses. Back in the 1980's, we used to debate if it mattered if we made money selling "potato chips or computer chips." But here is the real difference: consuming a lot of potato chips isn't good for you; consuming a lot of computer chips is.

I emphasize this because too often our discussions of government policy, technology, and economic growth dwell on the invention and sale of new technologies, but shortchange the all important topic of their use. Extension programs, like the electronic commerce extension program in my bill, are policy aimed at precisely spreading the use of more productive technology by small businesses.

With that in mind, the e-commerce revolution creates both opportunities and challenges for small businesses. On the one hand, it will open new markets to them. On the web, the garage shop can look as good as IBM. On the other hand, the high fixed costs, low marginal costs, and technical sophistication that can sometimes characterize e-commerce, when coupled with a good brand name, may allow larger, more established e-commerce firms to quickly move from market to market. Amazon.com has done such a wonderful job of making a huge variety of books widely available that it's been able to expand to CDs, to toys, to electronics, to auctions. Moreover, firms in more rural areas have suddenly found sophisticated, low cost, previously distant businesses entering their market, and competing with them. Thus, there is considerable risk that many small businesses will be left behind in the shift to e-commerce. That would not be good for them, nor for the rest of us, because we all benefit when everyone is more productive and everyone competes.

The root of this problem is the fact that many small firms have a hard time identifying and adopting new technology. They are hard working, but they just don't have the time, people, or money to understand all the different technologies they might use. And, they often don't even know where to turn to for help. Thus, while small firms are very flexible, they can be slow to adopt new technology, because they don't know which to use or what to do about it. That is why we have extension programs. Extension programs give small businesses low cost, impartial advice on what technologies are out there and how to use them.

What might an e-commerce extension program do? Imagine you're a small specialty foods retailer in rural New Mexico and you see e-commerce as a way to reach more customers. But your specialty is chiles, not computers; imagine all the questions you would have. How do I sell over the web? Can I buy supplies that way too? How do I keep hackers out of my system? What privacy policies should I follow? How do I use encryption to collect credit card numbers and guarantee customers that I'm who I am? Can I electronically integrate my sales orders with instructions to shippers like Federal Express? Should I band together with other local producers to form a chile cybermall? What servers, software, and telecommunications will I need and how much will it cost? Your local e-commerce extension center would answer those questions for you. And, you could trust their advice, because you would know they were impartial and had no interest in selling you a particular product.

This bill will lead to the creation of a high quality, nationwide network of non-profit organizations providing that kind of advice, analogous to the Manufacturing Extension Program, or MEP, network NIST runs today, but with a focus on e-commerce and on firms beyond manufacturers. MEP demonstrates that NIST could do this new job well.

Similarly, this bill is modeled on the MEP authorization. It retains the key features of MEP: a network of centers run by non-profits; strict merit selection; cost sharing; and periodic independent review of each center. In addition, it emphasizes serving small businesses in rural or more isolated areas, so that those businesses can get a leg up on e-commerce too. In short, this legislation takes an approach that has already been proven to work.

Practically speaking, if this bill becomes law, I assume NIST would begin by leveraging their MEP management expertise to start a few e-commerce extension centers and then gradually build out a network separate from MEP. I also want to note that this is a new, separate authorization for an e-commerce extension program because it will have a different focus than MEP and because I do not want it to displace MEP in any way.

Mr. President, I hope my colleagues will join me in supporting this important, timely, and practical piece of legislation. Just as a strong agricultural sector called for an agricultural extension service, and a strong industrial sector called for manufacturing extension, our shift to an information economy calls for electronic commerce extension.

THE VERY BAD DEBT BOXSCORE

Mr. HELMS. Mr. President, at the close of business yesterday, Wednesday, August 4, 1999, the Federal debt stood at \$5,615,253,056,263.06 (Five tril-

lion, six hundred fifteen billion, two hundred fifty-three million, fifty-six thousand, two hundred sixty-three dollars and six cents).

One year ago, August 4, 1998, the Federal debt stood at \$5,511,741,000,000 (Five trillion, five hundred eleven billion, seven hundred forty-one million).

Five years ago, August 4, 1994, the Federal debt stood at \$4,643,455,000,000 (Four trillion, six hundred forty-three billion, four hundred fifty-five million).

Ten years ago, August 4, 1989, the Federal debt stood at \$2,811,629,000,000 (Two trillion, eight hundred eleven billion, six hundred twenty-nine million) which reflects a doubling of the debt—an increase of almost \$3 trillion—\$2,803,624,056,263.06 (Two trillion, eight hundred three billion, six hundred twenty-four million, fifty-six thousand, two hundred sixty-three dollars and six cents) during the past 10 years.

ADVANCEMENT IN PEDIATRIC AUTISM RESEARCH ACT

Mr. KENNEDY. Mr. President, I welcome the opportunity to join Senator GORTON and many other distinguished colleagues as a sponsor of the Advancement in Pediatric Autism Research Act. Autism is a heartbreaking disorder that strikes at the core of family relationships. We need to do all we can to understand the causes of autism in order to learn how to treat this tragic condition more effectively, and ultimately to prevent it. I want to commend Senator GORTON, the Cure Autism Now Foundation, and the many organizations and families in Massachusetts for their impressive leadership in dealing with this important cause of disability in children. In this age of such extraordinary progress on preventing, treating and curing so many other serious and debilitating illnesses, we cannot afford to miss this unique opportunity for progress against autism as well.

Clearly, we can do more to provide support for children and families who face the tragedy of autism. At the same time, I am concerned about certain provisions in the proposed legislation which could inadvertently cause harm to children with autism and to our system of funding research.

One provision allows use of NIH funds for health care and other services that "will facilitate the participation" in research. We must be clear that research dollars should be used only to cover costs that are required to carry out research. Insurance providers should never be able to use participation in research as an excuse to avoid paying for medically necessary health care. In addition, we must be especially careful to protect vulnerable children and families from situations in which financial incentives could affect decisions about participation in research.

I am confident that we can work together to address such issues as the bill moves through Congress. I look forward to working with my colleagues,

with the advocacy organizations and with families to enact the best possible measure to bring hope to the lives of these very special children.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

Messages from the President of the United States were communicated to the Senate by Mr. Williams, one of his secretaries.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGES REFERRED

As an executive session the PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate messages from the President of the United States submitting a treaty and sundry nominations which were referred to the appropriate committees.

(The nominations received today are printed at the end of the Senate proceedings.)

PROPOSED LEGISLATION "CENTRAL AMERICAN AND HAITIAN PARITY ACT OF 1999"—MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT—PM 55

The PRESIDING OFFICER laid before the Senate the following message from the President of the United States, together with accompanying proposed legislation; which was referred to the Committee on Judiciary:

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to transmit for your immediate consideration and enactment the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999." Also transmitted is a section-by-section analysis. This legislative proposal, which would amend the Nicaraguan Adjustment and Central American Relief Act of 1997 (NACARA), is part of my Administration's comprehensive effort to support the process of democratization and stabilization now underway in Central America and Haiti and to ensure equitable treatment for migrants from these countries. The proposed bill would allow qualified national of El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Haiti an opportunity to become lawful permanent residents of the United States. Consequently, under this bill, eligible national of these countries would receive treatment equivalent to that granted to the Nicaraguans and Cubans under NACARA.

Like Nicaraguans and Cubans, many Salvadorans, Guatemalans, Hondurans, and Haitians fled human rights abuses or unstable political and economic conditions in the 1980s and 1990s. Yet these latter groups received lesser treatment than that granted to Nicaraguans and Cubans by NACARA. The United States has a strong foreign policy interest in providing the same treatment to these similarly situated people. Moreover, the countries from which these migrants have come are young and fragile democracies in which the United States has played and will continue to play a very important role. The return of these migrants to these countries would place significant demands on their economic and political systems.

By offering legal status to a number of nationals of these countries with long-standing ties in the United States, we can advance our commitment to peace and stability in the region.

Passage of the "Central American and Haitian Parity Act of 1999" will evidence our commitment to fair and even-handed treatment of nationals from these countries and to the strengthening of democracy and economic stability among important neighbors. I urge the prompt and favorable consideration of this legislative proposal by the Congress.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON.

THE WHITE HOUSE August 5, 1999.

MESSAGES FROM THE HOUSE

At 9:36 a.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Berry, one of its reading clerks, announcing that the House agrees to the amendments of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 1664) making emergency supplemental appropriations for military operations, refugee relief, and humanitarian assistance relating to the conflict in Kosovo, and for military operations in Southwest Asia for the fiscal year ending September 30, 1999, and for other purposes.

At 2:11 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Berry, one of its reading clerks, announcing that the House agrees to the report of the committee of conference on the disagreeing two Houses on the amendment of the Senate to the bill (H.R. 2466) to provide for reconciliation pursuant to sections 105 and 211 of the concurrent resolution on the budget for fiscal year 2000.

ENROLLED BILL SIGNED

At 4:07 p.m., a message from the House of Representatives, delivered by Mr. Hanrahan, one of its reading clerks, announced that the Speaker has signed the following enrolled bill:

H.R. 2465. An act making appropriations for military construction, family housing and base realignment and closure for the Department of Defense for the fiscal year ending September 30, 2000, and for other purposes.

The enrolled bill was signed subsequently by the President pro tempore (Mr. THURMOND).

EXECUTIVE AND OTHER COMMUNICATIONS

The following communications were laid before the Senate, together with accompanying papers, reports, and documents, which were referred as indicated:

EC-4528. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the report of a certification of a proposed Manufacturing License Agreement with the Republic of Korea; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4529. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Depart-

ment of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles and services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to Japan; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4530. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to Denmark; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4531. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to the United Kingdom; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4532. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to Russia; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4533. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to Italy; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4534. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to French Guiana; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4535. A communication from the Assistant Secretary, Legislative Affairs, Department of State, transmitting, pursuant to the Arms Export Control Act, the certification of a proposed license for the export of defense articles or services under a contract in the amount of \$50,000,000 or more to the United Kingdom; to the Committee on Foreign Relations.

EC-4536. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 13-111, "Service Improvement and Fiscal Year 2000 Budget Support Act of 1999"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4537. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 13-114, "Designation of Capitalsaurus Court and Technical Correction Amendment Act of 1999"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4538. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 13-115, "Closing of a Public Alley in Square 113, S.O. 97-85, Act of 1999"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4539. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 13-120, "Tobacco Settlement Model Temporary Act of 1999"; to the Committee on Governmental Affairs.

EC-4540. A communication from the Chairman of the Council of the District of Columbia, transmitting, pursuant to law, a report on D.C. Act 13-116, "Closing of a Public Alley